

108
Manchester, Oct. 23, 1867.

Dear Mrs. Albright:

Though surrounded with friendly visitors, and exceedingly busy in making preparations to leave this city for Liverpool, I must find time to at least thank you for your very kind letter, and for a copy of "The Revival" accompanying it. I have read the article in the latter on Ritualism and Rationalism, with reference to the doctrine of the Atonement. I cannot now analyze it as I would, and must leave it without any other comment than this — that, in our day and generation, nothing is easier, or more respectable, or more readily accepted as evidence, ~~than~~ of piety, than to talk of "the merits of the Savior," and to make everything of his atoning blood. But to me this amounts to nothing, and furnishes no evidence of ~~the~~ real character ~~and~~ or of religious attainment. Newman Hall says — "Would we see our churches prosper, let us preach Christ crucified." But what is it to preach Christ crucified? Whose dictum is to be oracular? Whose interpretation

of the language is to be accepted as a finality? It had a very different meaning in apostolic times from what it has in our own, and vitalized the conduct of those who, in the face of persecution and death, dared to espouse the cause of the crucified Nazarene; whereas, now, it has no perceptible influence in that particular, and the Adversary himself is indifferent to its proclamation, knowing that in the changed circumstances of the age it is simply a popular dogma. Besides, have not the churches had "Christ crucified" preached in them and to them abundantly? That was a favorite theme of the pulpits in the Southern States of America, where the churches held six hundred thousand slaves as personal property, and where the lives of those who pleaded for "the suffering and the dumb" would quickly have been sacrificed if they could have been caught. It is not a hard thing to go with the current. We shall never know ourselves in that manner. Old tests, which were vital as ^{evidence} ~~tests~~ of piety in their day, in the course of time become worthless.

"New occasions teach new duties; time makes ancient
good uncouth:

They must upward still, and onward, who would
keep abreast with Truth."

Jesus plainly foresaw to what hypocritical
uses he would be put, when he described a certain
class as exclaiming—"Lord, Lord, have we not
prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done
many wonderful works?" And you know how he
estimated them.

For myself, I do not care to know what
any one may say or profess in regard to those
of the far distant past, "of whom the world was
not ~~the~~ worthy," and who cheerfully laid down their
lives for the truth. This proves nothing, because it
costs nothing. Even the Pharisees made it a proof
of their regard for true religion by saying, "If we had
lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have
participated in stoning the prophets." The Christ
of Christendom is without saving power; nay, he
is made to sanction and uphold all manner of
abominations. The true Christ is still "a man

of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," and "despised
and rejected of men." He is still in conflict with
Church and State, and disowned by them; still
accused of being "not of God, because he keeps not the
sabbath-day"; still

W. L. G.
Unfinished letter to
Mrs. Abigail,
Manchester, Aug.
October 23, 1827.